Characters

- Tony
- James
- Mary

Act

A room, dominated by a long table downstage, running parallel to the footlights. From the rear, ***TONY*** *runs on, carrying a suitcase that he throws to the floor, which is immediately cleared by five* ***SERVANTS*** *in tuxedos, dark glasses, and conelike hats.* ***TONY*** *himself is dressed in a buisness suit with a floral tie, but he also wears glasses with one lens blacked out and a giant, elaborate eighteenth-century white wig.*

The ***SERVANTS*** *are present through most of the play, performing somewhat aberrant, carefully choreographed actions, delivering props to provoke the actors which are sometimes used and sometimes rejected — any future directors of the play should feel free to fully develop interaction between the three main characters and the servants.*

As the ***SERVANTS*** *hurry off,* ***JAMES*** *appears from the other side of the stage, moving slowly to the table, balancing a glass of milk on a round serving tray. He is dressed in a dark suit, and his head is bandaged; plus, a small bandage covers a cut on his face. The rhythm of a soft repetitive music fills the stage and continues throughout the play.*

TONY

(*Leaning over the table toward* ***JAMES***)

This doesn't make any sense.

JAMES

None at all?

TONY

None at all. When I left — you were on the planet of the disturbed people.

JAMES

Yes, I suppose I was.

TONY

Now I find you here —

JAMES

Where else should I be?

TONY

Acting almost normal.

JAMES

There's nothing normal about the way I'm acting.

TONY

Of course there is. The milk in that glass is real milk.

JAMES

I'm not ready to deny that.

TONY

Of course not, because it wouldn't make any sense.

JAMES

Do you see me drinking this milk?

TONY

Not right now.

JAMES

Of course not. You're welcome to hang around watching me all night —

TONY

No, thank you.

JAMES

I don't think you'll see me doing anything special with this milk.

TONY

It's a kind of drug.

JAMES

Of course. It calms me.

TONY

Which is why you avoid tasting it?

JAMES

I don't avoid tasting it, it just never happens that I have such an urge.

TONY

Then why are you holding it, my friend?

JAMES

This can't be answered.

TONY

You don't know?

JAMES

I can't answer.

TONY

This is weird.

JAMES

This is your perception of something weird.

TONY

I agree.

JAMES

To me it doesn't seem weird at all.

TONY

That could be your particular perspective.

JAMES

Exactly. That could be my perspective.

(*As the music rises,* ***JAMES*** *and* ***TONY*** *and the* ***SERVANTS*** *are running around the room, exchanging glasses of milk.* ***JAMES*** *offers his glass to* ***TONY***.)

TONY

Are you trying to make me drink milk?

JAMES

Maybe I am …

TONY

This doesn't make any sense. Why would you offer me your milk?

JAMES

I already explained.

(*There is a crash, and the lights change to reveal* ***MARY,*** *leaning against a wall, her face masked, exposing a naked breast.* ***JAMES*** *looks, then turns away to think.*)

What do you know. Am I acting normal? No, there's nothing normal about the way I'm acting.

TONY

At the same time, you say there's nothing weird.

JAMES

Do I say that?

TONY

Put those together, they don't make any sense.

JAMES

I put them together.

(***MARY*** *has disappeared.*)

They make perfect sense.

TONY

This is very weird.

JAMES

Of course it is, my friend!

(***SERVANTS*** *have grabbed* ***TONY*** *and are pulling down his pants.*)

TONY

Hey, you still think of me as a friend?

JAMES

(*As* ***TONY*** *bends down to lift his pants*)

You entered a room with no back door —

TONY

Did I do that?

JAMES

— and somebody else, here already with a glass of warm milk, so *your* head goes into some kind of terrible spin. I˙e˙, "I can't open the door to my own mind, so how can I find the way out?"
That's not you speaking, of course.

TONY

Hey, I'm not speaking.

(*The **SERVANTS** are rear, watching.*)

JAMES

I'm just featuring the unrecognizable tone of voice somebody else is good at using like I'm good at using.

TONY

We're not alone, I'm afraid.

JAMES

Right. We decide to go partying in some of the very best places — says the man who pops in with the funny crossed eyes.

TONY

The eyes is off limits.

JAMES

But the minute he's really *drunked up* his glass of milk …

TONY

It must have been really good stuff.

JAMES

… he goes into other areas fast.

TONY

I wish it could always be like that —

JAMES

Which means you're thinking about yourself first, instead of that ex-cross-eyed milk drinker — right?

TONY

Right.

JAMES

Right. But I do notice you haven't asked for much in the way of explanation. Then again, who knows much about tailspins or other things worth talking about, so,

(*Everyone collapses to the floor.*)

Just drop in on me like you did, and we'll all have a good laugh about this —
Except as of yet — nobody else is here. So "who's really laughing" is my next logical question.

(***JAMES*** *rises, runs into a wall, and staggers back from the collision; he ends up bending over as a* ***SERVANT*** *prepares to hit him with a small paddle.*)

Ah — that famous back door —

(*The* ***SERVANT*** *whacks* ***JAMES.)***

There it is!

TONY AND JAMES

(*Both with a delayed reaction, even though only* ***JAMES*** *has been hit.*)

Ow!

TONY

I don't see anything.

JAMES

It's a question of getting a little more information to surface.

TONY

You can make that possible?

(***SERVANTS*** *carry onstage a small table piled with books.*)

JAMES

You tell me.

TONY

How do we do that? How do we get more information to surface than is surfacing right this minute?

JAMES

A better idea.

TONY

(*Tearing up pages of a book*)

Better than this?

JAMES

We could have a séance using this very table.

TONY

Just two of us isn't enough.

JAMES

Let's try —

TONY

Well, you may try, but —

(*The table falls over by itself.*)

TONY & JAMES

Holy shit!

TONY

Maybe this means — the table doesn't want to be used for a séance.

JAMES

(*Lifting the table.*)

I don't like recalcitrant tables.

(*He sets it down and straightens a tablecloth the **SERVANTS** have provided. The **SERVANTS** lay down two place settings, and **JAMES** gives the silverware a final adjustment.*)

That should calm it down, don't you think?

TONY

I wonder what it was afraid of revealing.

JAMES

Maybe it just wanted to eat something.

TONY

How many unpleasant aspects of this shared universe should we uncover please?

JAMES

Ah! Food for thought —

(*There is a crash, and a **SERVANT** places a framed window against the wall.*)

This window you thought was a window onto the world outside?

TONY

(*Seizing the window*)

Wait a minute. I never noticed these windowpanes were in fact false.

JAMES

That's impossible.

TONY

It was already night when I arrived, so I never realized they were black, opaque material.

JAMES

Maybe it's a blackboard.

TONY

Blackboards are supposed to be transparent.

JAMES

You can see through *me,* apparently? In fact, I'm not necessarily in this room.

(*Some **SERVANTS** shoot him with bows and arrows — cupids aiming at his heart, as **MARY** passes through in the rear.*)

Ow! Total transparency means — you know a great deal about me already.

TONY

A great deal?

JAMES

A great deal. Am I acting normal?

(*He hits **TONY** on the shoulder.*)

Hey! Why did you fly into a panic when you saw me carrying my milk?

(*Several **SERVANTS** present several glasses of milk.*)

TONY

I was expecting something like this to happen.

JAMES

Here's an idea —

(*Offers his hand in friendship.*)

— let me introduce myself.

TONY

Skip it.

JAMES

You seem frightened.

TONY

I have every reason to be frightened, but I keep it bottled up inside.

JAMES

That's where it shows.

(*A suitcase has been left on the long table. **TONY** opens it.*)

TONY

Inside?

JAMES

(*As **TONY** extracts a bloody apron from the suitcase*)

Outside.

TONY

(*Putting on the apron*)

You assume a great deal about me, sir. But since I'm not obligated to participate in non-verifiable assumptions, I'll just reclaim my belongings and vanish like before, thank you.

(*He picks up the suitcase and starts to leave as* ***JAMES*** *blocks the exit.*)

JAMES

The only exit is on my side of the room, you big tough palooka.

TONY

I was thinking about the back door.

JAMES

You were thinking about an impenetrable window!

(*A crash, and the lights go out, and we can see* ***MARY*** *and the* ***SERVANTS*** *in the shadows, all appearing with eye masks and long carrot noses.* ***MARY*** *is leaning against the wall and massaging her breasts.*)

Why do you suppose neither of us is moving?

TONY

Did we succeed in changing an unpleasant subject?

JAMES

Ah — doesn't the table look inviting, bedecked with flowers?

TONY

I already picked up on that.

JAMES

It's as plain as the nose on my face.

TONY

What's wrong with my nose?

(*A* ***SERVANT*** *has placed a realistic-looking human head on the long table.*)

JAMES

Who knows?

(***JAMES*** *removes the nose from the human head. He studies it.*)

Is there something funny about his or her nose?

(*It makes him sneeze violently into a hankerchief, which he tosses on the table. The* ***SERVANTS*** *collect the hankerchief and display it against a picture frame. The blood residue of the sneeze resembles a cosmic display of the Milky Way.*)

TONY

Remind me what planet is this?

(*Pause.*)

JAMES

Difficult to decide.

TONY

Okay, what meal is this table set for?

JAMES

Even more problematic.

(*A* ***SERVANT*** *pours some cereal into a bowl.*)

TONY

Wrong, breakfast, apparently — which is not very appropriate.

JAMES

Why not?

TONY

Oh please, I've been around. Time for breakfast is long since gone.

JAMES

But it's my favorite meal.

TONY

What's on the menu that's so special?

JAMES

See for yourself.

(*He digs into the cereal enthusiastically.*)

TONY

How can you justify eating that tiny stuff?

JAMES

You can't be serious.

TONY

Why shouldn't I be serious?

JAMES

Listen to me carefully, you big tough palooka. Hidden inside each small, perfect grain of wheat, a vast store of energy is waiting to be released.

TONY

No.

JAMES

(*Holding a flake of cereal up to the light*)

Yes!

TONY

Where do you get this information?

JAMES

This! This! This is why I have breakfast, many times over — in search of what never arrives? Maybe, but maybe it does; and each time, I'm just royally fooled as usual.

(***MARY*** *has appeared behind* ***JAMES****, and is refilling his bowl with cereal.*)

TONY

Apparently more wheat flakes are being heaped on for a better breakfast.

JAMES

With no real possibility of satisfaction, of course.

(*He turns and sees* ***MARY****. Their eyes meet; they both stagger back and simultaneously explode with a loud sneeze.* ***MARY*** *runs from the room and* ***JAMES*** *grabs the cereal and begins shoveling it down, scattering cereal over the carpet as he does so.*)

TONY

You wolf down your breakfast with amazing enthusiasm —

JAMES

Wolf? The animal? Well, hungry indeed I am — but never satisfied.

(*A crash, and the* ***SERVANTS*** *run to hold another window against the wall.*)

TONY

Holy shit!

JAMES

It's okay. That window is only a mirror.

TONY

Not for me personally, I hope.

JAMES

Let me invite you to share my most intimate experiences. Come to me. Eat.

TONY

We're still not in sync, I'm afraid. What time is it?

JAMES

Nighttime.

TONY

I thought this was breakfast?

JAMES

Right again.

TONY

Ah, you want the feeling of a new day beginning again and again and again —

JAMES

(*Interrupts*)

Notice? — Notice anything about my mouth in particular?

TONY

(*Turns away*)

I can't bear to look at it.

JAMES

(*Runs to the other side of the room*)

Can you see it better over here?

TONY

Yes.

JAMES

What's special about it?

TONY

It always wants to be eating things.

JAMES

How can an invisible desire be so visible? Wait a minute — what desire am I talking about?

TONY

What desire are you talking about?

JAMES

I don't think this is the right time for an extended philosophical discussion.

TONY

Use a finger, point to something.

JAMES

What happens if the thing I'm pointing to isn't visible?

TONY

Turn around three times fast, close your big blue eyes — open them, the person you see standing in front of you is somebody different.

JAMES

Smiling?

TONY

Maybe.

JAMES

In close physical proximity?

TONY

What desire are you talking about?

JAMES

Well, let's just say — breakfast, apparently. I'm imagining it.

TONY

I find it hard to imagine that desire.

JAMES

To reestablish our relationship on a less emotional basis.

TONY

Emotion?

JAMES

(*Holding up a flake of cereal*)

Yes, I offer you in friendship a single, administrable dose of energy.

TONY

Where is it?

JAMES

In my breakfast cereal.

TONY

It's an acquired taste.

JAMES

Not by choice.

TONY

You do eat sloppily, however — so what's necessary is attire that appropriately guards both of us from such sloppy eating habits.

(*He pulls off the tablecloth from the small table, scattering cereal and plates, and puts the tablecloth around* ***JAMES****'S neck to serve as an apron.*)

That seems satisfactory.

JAMES

(*Studying his improvised apron*)

How do we use this thing?

TONY

We stay wrapped up in it, so food of obscure derivation, even though it misses the mouth, never reaches what's underneath.

(*They have acquired skirts as well as aprons, and they prance across the stage, whirling, trying them out.*)

JAMES

Perhaps I'd rather go outside for breakfast after all.

TONY

I haven't spoiled it for you here, I hope?

JAMES

Oh, no! I'm making a quick mental comparison between this room, limited in its appeal, and the wide avenue I remember downstairs, lined with trees and white café tables sparkling in the sunlight.

TONY

I remind you, it's night.

JAMES

Here's an idea. For extra money, breakfast can be served at night.

TONY

But that frustrates your particular lust for the ambiance of a day just beginning.

JAMES

Which never lives up to my expectations —

TONY

Let me show you something that does —

JAMES

What?

TONY

The sun.

(*The lights change suddenly, and* ***JAMES*** *stares into very intense light, pouring from offstage.*)

JAMES

(*Softly*)

I see it one hundred percent.

TONY

And having seen it?

JAMES

It's enough. It's … everything.

(*Pause, then he takes off his apron and turns to* ***TONY,*** *who is spinning in ecstacy.*)

Do me a tremendous favor, please.

TONY

Yes.

JAMES

You say 'yes', without knowing what I'm going to ask.

TONY

Yes, yes!

(*He stops spinning.*)

JAMES

First, collect these flakes of my breakfast cereal accidentally scattered over the carpet —

TONY

You don't plan on eating them, I hope?

JAMES

I'm not sure yet.

TONY

They're very soiled by now.

JAMES

I'd like to examine each one of them for myself, thank you —

(***TONY*** *bends down to pick up a flake.*)

Careful! Careful! There's tremendous energy in each individual flake!

TONY

I'll collect just a few at a time. You start examining these while I move on to others.

(*He holds some out to* ***JAMES.***)

JAMES

Just … put them on the table.

TONY

"Just"?

JAMES

Just.

TONY

I think "put them on the table" were the only words necessary.

JAMES

"Just"? — Yes. My mouth certainly moves to excess, which I let happen in anticipation of energy yet to come —

TONY

(*Seething inside*)

— You made me lose my train of thought!

JAMES

It's a conspiracy, in fact — so much extra energy floating around in my head it overflows —

TONY

(*Exploding in terrible rage*)

You don't understand! When I lose my train of thought, it's like losing contact with EVERYTHING! You can't IMAGINE how irrationally UPSET I GET!

(*The music builds, while the enraged* ***TONY*** *has acquired a handsaw with which he tries to destroy the furniture.* ***JAMES*** *tries to stop him several times, and each time, they both lose their footing and fall down — as the deafening music continues, and they scream out in terror, "Oh my God! Oh my God!" Then* ***TONY*** *somehow gets his saw between* ***JAMES'S*** *legs, and* ***JAMES*** *screams in pain and pulls away.*)

TONY

Okay. This may hurt somebody, but pain is the way in which people get knowledge, so hurting isn't what happens. So it won't hurt.

JAMES

This is amazing. I thought you were going to saw wood, but now I realize you're going to saw my arm, so I'm in the process of detaching myself from that extremity —

TONY

(*As he tosses a stuffed arm onto the table*)

Here it is.

JAMES

Is that real?

TONY

The only problem is — it's already been sawed off apparently.

JAMES

You were perfectly right. It didn't hurt. Shit.

(*A beam of wood suddenly appears from offstage.*)

TONY

What should I do with this stick?

JAMES

That's your problem —

TONY

Which of us should receive a blow from this stick?

(*He whirls it, and it falls to the floor.*)

JAMES

Why're you putting it down?

TONY

Why do you think I picked it up?

JAMES

The effect was comical.

TONY

I'm not sure the result is comical —

JAMES

(*As another beam of wood appears*)

Holy shit! Here it is again —

TONY

So which one of us gets hurt?

(***JAMES*** *whirls with the beam, and crashes it into the wall, at the same time that* ***MARY*** *appears on the other side of the room and* ***TONY*** *covers her face with a phonograph record, hiding her from* ***JAMES****'S sight.*)

JAMES

No. Here's what really happens. Somebody —

TONY

Me?

JAMES

No.

TONY

You?

JAMES

(*Indicating the hidden* ***MARY***)

Don't do this to me.

TONY

I'm about to do it, but I haven't done it yet.

JAMES

That's why nobody should move.

(*He drops the beam, which accidentally hits his foot, making him howl in pain.* ***MARY*** *ducks out from behind the record and laughs at him.*)

MARY

I apologize for laughing.

JAMES

(*Glancing at* ***MARY****, then turning away*)

This is not something I need in my life!

TONY

I pick up on a certain electricity between you two people.

JAMES

Why should I believe something nobody can verify?

MARY

Suppose a man with whom I've never had a proper conversation before says "I can bring you the dreams of a lifetime," and he smiles. Should I believe him?

JAMES

I never smile.

MARY

Then what could I possibly be remembering?

TONY

(*Holding out a book*)

Look twice.

MARY

I've never read that kind of book before.

TONY

But you recognize the smile —?

MARY

What smile?

JAMES

I never smile.

TONY

Let me give you something that will put a smile back.

MARY

Where?

TONY

On your face, sweetie.

MARY

(*Opens the book, then throws it away*)

I can tell — this book says it all.

(*She runs from the room.*)

JAMES

What book were you letting her read?

TONY

(*Snatching the book away so* ***JAMES*** *can't see it*)

Nothing.

JAMES

You're hiding it from me?

TONY

(*Putting it into a suitcase*)

Storing it for future reference.

JAMES

I'll carry my own baggage, thank you.

TONY

You won't find it as interesting as she did.

JAMES

Show me the book.

TONY

(*Opening the suitcase*)

It's in the suitcase.

JAMES

I see it.

(*Pause. Then he grabs the book and leafs through its pages.*)

I can't make heads or tails of this thing. Read it to me.

TONY

Out loud?

JAMES

If I hear it, I might comprehend better than just reading.

TONY

All the words are run together, so it's just letter after letter — ad infinitum.

(***JAMES*** *makes a gibberish noise.*)

I don't know how to pronounce that.

JAMES

But you read it to yourself?

TONY

That way I can project my own meanings into it.

JAMES

You must have a lot of secrets.

TONY

I don't think so.

JAMES

Secrets! That's why I left a minute ago, and that's why I'm about to repeat myself.

TONY

Everything I do is perfectly normal.

JAMES

One more chance.

TONY

To do what?

JAMES

Time's up.

(*The **SERVANTS** have assembled in the rear. One holds up a clock. Another has a silver tray on which **JAMES** places the book.*)

Find what I just hid in plain sight.

TONY

(*He looks under the table, then runs about the room, avoiding the silver tray and singing under his breath*)

I'm looking high
I'm looking low
I'm gonna find where did you go
I'm looking up
I'm looking down
I'm gonna look all over town.

(*He comes back and confronts **JAMES.**)*

You win.

JAMES

No I don't.

TONY

Why?

JAMES

I don't know where I put it!

(*Both close their eyes and whirl as the music rises. **JAMES** runs and grabs the clock, which he holds in front of his crotch. He starts rubbing the clock face, moans, and collapses to the floor. Everyone assembles to study him.*)

TONY

Did you think getting dizzy would help? Well, it doesn't.

JAMES

I'm just as dizzy as before, you son of a bitch.

TONY

Then maybe it helped.

JAMES

Right. Acting almost normal — looking into somebody's eyes and suddenly realizing somebody's looking back. So going public with no real place to do that because after all, I can't just sit down in the middle of the carpet — I mean I could, but I don't.

(*Slowly rises.*)

And I can't help thinking, a story with powerful emotional content, begun but then dropped midway, makes no sense in the sense of — why begin even?

(***MARY*** *sneaks in behind him and slowly puts her hands under his arms, reaching around to massage his chest.*)

But then plunging a little more deeply into the relevant matter, I begin glimmering for myself a very desirable self-turbulence with no escape routes that seem particularly desirable to me.

MARY

(*Whispering into his ear*)

What desire are you talking about?

JAMES

(*Whirling as she runs away*)

Who's talking!?

TONY

I think there's somebody you should turn around and meet.

JAMES

Oh, in principle I know who that person is, but I don't want to meet that person!

TONY

Why not?

JAMES

Don't you get it?

(*The **SERVANTS** have cymbals, which they clash in accompaniment to the speech of the excited **JAMES**.*)

I don't need any of this in my life!

MARY

Well, I don't see any of this in my life either.

TONY

Take the risk.

(*The **SERVANTS** are now on the floor, bowing down to **JAMES.**)*

Try acting normal, like the vast majority of the human race.

(*The music rises, and the three characters bang crazily into the walls as the **SERVANTS** hold hands and dance once around the room, then exit.*)

MARY

(*Very excited by all the turmoil*)

Okay, okay, okay, is it gonna happen? What the hell — or isn't it gonna happen?

TONY

There's somebody special I think you should meet.

JAMES

I know who it is, but I don't want to look.

TONY

Why not?

JAMES

It would be too intense.

MARY

That's what I say, it would be too intense.

TONY

I thought both of you would like that.

MARY

Sometimes she would.

JAMES

Sometimes he would not.

TONY

Accept emotional reality, please — pivot on the tiniest hint of information.

MARY

Pivot?

TONY

Ah, the lady's asking for a definition.

JAMES

A nonlocatable point that hurtles me into emotional turmoil.

TONY

Just write down "pivot."

JAMES

Just?

TONY

Just. No more. no less. Everybody pivot.

(***SERVANTS*** *put a white cloth over* ***JAMES'S*** *head.*)

MARY

I don't want to pivot.

TONY

Why not?

MARY

I can imagine the results.

JAMES

(*From under the cloth*)

Wait a minute. Do I know that voice?

MARY

Hello? The only way you can find out for sure is by taking a big risk.

(*The cloth is removed.* ***JAMES*** *and* ***MARY*** *stare into each other's eyes for the first time, staggering backwards from the shock.*)

MARY AND JAMES: You! You!

(*They collapse and rise quickly.*)

MARY

(*Trying to collect her thoughts, spinning to the music*)

This is me. This is Mary from someplace very far away. This must be something that's happening to me.

JAMES

How the mind works — it reaches for something that glows in the dark —

(*He reaches out towards* ***MARY,*** *accidentally looks into her eyes, and turns away screaming.*)

Ow!

TONY

That must have been the sun.

JAMES

It's midnight, goddamn it, I don't think it was the sun.

TONY

But the sun's always shining.

JAMES

Okay, so somebody's eyes burn through my head while the mind clouds the experience with something different —

MARY

I turned around as fast as I could —

JAMES

(*Putting the cloth over his head again, as protection*)

Present but hard to notice, because the mind is more efficiently distracted elsewhere.

TONY

Does somebody's mind really work like that?

JAMES

One more distraction, please!

MARY

I don't see anything different.

JAMES

A painting about pain, I believe.

MARY

A painting about pain?

TONY

A painting about pain.

MARY

I never imagined there could be such a painting.

(*A* ***SERVANT*** *carries in a six-foot-tall blank canvas, and* ***MARY*** *goes to examine it.*)

JAMES

I'm about to reveal it — turn around, of course.

MARY

Really?

JAMES

Perhaps I'm just talking to myself. Turn around, of course!

(*He pulls the cloth off his head as* ***MARY*** *turns to face him, and once again the shock of looking into each other's eyes knocks them to the floor.*)

JAMES AND MARY

You!

JAMES

Why do I fall down?

MARY

Okay, me too I fell down!

JAMES

(*As both regain their feet*)

Okay. A big disappointment.

MARY

(*As she gets on the table to lie on her back with her legs in the air and show her hindquarters to* ***JAMES***.)

See?

JAMES

Human beings never get inside each other.

MARY

I don't know how —

JAMES

No way exists for one human being to get inside another human being!

MARY

Let's try again.

JAMES

Every *conceivable* way has been tried — nothing works!

(*He turns away in desperation.*)

Give up, please.

MARY

I do give up.

JAMES

You haven't given up.

MARY

Yes, I give up.

JAMES

(*Falling to the floor in anguish*)

Give up, change both of us completely.

MARY

Please … touch me?

JAMES

Where?

MARY

(*Swinging her legs down, sitting on the table*)

One my arms, two my knees, three my thighs, four my breasts, five my fingers, six between my legs, seven under my arms —

JAMES

Give up!

MARY

I do give up.

JAMES

You haven't given up!

MARY

Have you?

JAMES

Not yet.

MARY

Why not?

JAMES

I don't think it's something you can do on purpose.

MARY

It's like an accident.

(*There is the sound of a crash, and a startled* ***MARY*** *and* ***JAMES*** *run to hold each other, then, realizing they are in each other's arms, break away and run to opposite walls.*)

That was scary.

JAMES

I don't know what it was —

MARY

That's what makes it scary!

JAMES

(*After a pause, whispering*)

Please, get undressed.

MARY

(*Laughs*)

I apologize for laughing, smack me.

(*She holds out her hand and slaps it herself.*)

You get undressed.

JAMES

(*He considers, then whirls around and crosses to her without looking at her, begins to undress, then notices the* ***SERVANTS*** *lined up behind the table, with lifted cymbals held in the air, waiting to clash them together. He whirls towards them.*)

Excuse me?

MARY

Hey, say something nice to me.

JAMES

I'm the idea man. I don't have any!

(*The **SERVANTS** clash the cymbals.*)

I don't really need this in my life!

(*They do it again.*)

MARY

I don't really need this in my life either.

(*The **SERVANTS** exit, and **JAMES** stands rooted to the spot, staring at **MARY**. A battle is going on inside him, and finally, with his face distorted in agony, he shouts at her.*)

JAMES

Go away!

(*She hesitates, not knowing what to do. Then she whirls and dashes out of the room. There is a pause as **JAMES** stares after her. Then he shouts after her in anguish.*)

Come back!

(*She runs back into the room. They stare at each other. Then he again bellows at her.*)

Go away!

(*She hesitates, runs off. He starts to go also, then stops, turns back to look where she has disappeared and again shouts.*)

Come back!

(*He dashes from the room and a second later she reappears. As she reenters, **TONY** comes up behind her and offers her a crown.*)

MARY

Is that for me?

TONY

Do you deserve it?

MARY

(*She holds it, considers it, then plops it forcefully upon her head*)

This is about time! Me —!

(*She screams to express her frustration, running out of the room.*)

Erghhhhhhh!

TONY

(*Calling after her*)

The sun's always shining my dear.

MARY

(*Reentering immediately*)

Looking for a respite from this pressurized psychological turbulence I decided to go outside. Well, I decided to go to — well — I know! The classical record music store, yeah!

(*She has run around the table as the* ***SERVANTS*** *clash cymbals.*)

— and buy myself a record, violins and harpsichordings — because I was in such a turmoil after all this stuff happening — I needed a little majestic something in my life to make me feel better. But my eyes hurt.

TONY

(*Pointing to his blanked-out eyeglass*)

Hey, the eyes is off limits.

MARY

Okay. I felt inside a shell, like a big red lobster that was my own body maybe, with my head clogged up — ah, ah, ah …

(*She is fighting a sneeze.*)

— excuse me — ah-choo!

(*Cymbals clash, and she runs around the table once as the music crests. Then she stops, and a faraway look comes into her eye.*)

What would happen to me if I opened my ears to this musical majesty I'm imagining? Either I myself would find some way to fuck it up, or it would kill me instead.

TONY

Ah, killed by great music.

MARY

Hey, we're talking Mr˙ Mozart here, really great stuff. Oh! I wish I was on some other one of the millions of millions of planets in the whole Milky Way in the skies. — Who am I kidding? I'd still have the same problems, still be bored, bored, bored in every inch of my body — let's see what I mean by that — eyes, brain, inner nose, inside the ears,

(*The **SERVANTS** have come and are climbing over the table; all freeze in place, with their rear ends facing the audience.*)

— plus lots of amazing body orifices I can't locate or choose to name, that's what the beautiful music would have to go to work on, but would it be effective?

(*The **SERVANTS** have come down on the other side of the table and collapse.*)

I don't think so. But you know, inside me still is such a powerful, powerful need, I have to get out and purchase some shitty worn-out record. Some shitty morsel of worn-out Mozart or something, because you know what? This is the only thing that can be background music for my whole life, which up until now is something that I have to call — deep shit in the middle. But this way of fixing things is not something I believe in. No more atmosphere, please! No more worn-out Mozart nostalgia shit for me. Shit!

(*She starts giggling with pleasure.*)

— But I like it, I like it, I like it! But this is not something I *should* like. You see, when I look in a mirror — this is very "now" for me — what do I see?

JAMES

(*Lurking in the shadows, wearing dark glasses to protect his eyes from **MARY***)

You see me?

MARY

I see myself.

JAMES

Shit. We have lots in common after all.

MARY

(*As she leaves the room in disgust*)

Come back into my life so it can be more terrible than ever.

JAMES

(*Calling after her*)

Sure thing, "sweetie"! Did I hear somebody just put the two of us into a very precarious position?

(*The **SERVANTS** have all lined up behind the table.*)

MARY

(*She slowly returns, wearing dark glasses to protect her eyes from **JAMES**. A lit cigarette in her hand.*)

I don't know if I should believe anything you tell me.

JAMES

That's because things pop out of me with a certain violence.

MARY

I don't doubt that violence.

JAMES

Can't you tell — deep inside I'm not a violent person.

MARY

Then why are you trying to provoke me?

JAMES

I have a confession to make.

MARY

So do I.

TONY

I don't believe either of you comedians.

MARY

Believe this comedian. I'm part of a very secret organization. A group of people who seem, on the surface — well, how do I seem?

(*She puts her cigarette between the lips of the most attractive **SERVANT**. After he takes a puff, she takes it back and puffs on it.*)

Normal? Or rather, "disturbed"?

(*There is a crash, and she waves it away with a flick of her hand.*)

Yeah, yeah. I'm talking about a group of people, some of them very, very good friends of mine, who spend their lives developing techniques to disrupt the lives of other people.

JAMES

You just told me about it, didn't you?

MARY

Did I?

JAMES

So how could it be secret?

MARY

I broke the rules.

JAMES

I, too, have a confession to make.

MARY

What?

TONY

I don't believe either of you comedians.

JAMES

Believe this comedian. I'm part of the same organization.

MARY

That must be why you have this terrible effect on me.

(*She thrusts at him with an accusing finger.*)

— I curse you!

JAMES

(*Collapsing to the floor*)

I curse you!

MARY

(*Collapsing also*)

— I curse you! I curse you again! I curse you once more on top of that!

JAMES

I wasn't protected, but I looked into your eyes for the first time, and my eyes hurt and my legs collapsed under me —

MARY

I didn't see you fall down.

JAMES

Of course not! Because you fell down at the exact same moment.

MARY

I don't remember.

JAMES

Yes, yes, yes — that was because I fell down at the exact same moment.

MARY

What happened?

JAMES

(*Taking a deep breath*)

You looked back at me.

MARY

Oh, no — you looked at ME!

JAMES

We started bleeding from the eyes!

MARY

I don't see blood.

JAMES

This is possible! Take a knife and cut out from two heads belonging to us two times, two eyes between the two of us, and grind them into one another like four pieces of broken glass.

MARY

(*As **JAMES** is crawling towards her on all fours*)

Stop that! STOP THAT!

JAMES

Listen to this, please. If your beautiful face gets pressed up really TIGHT against my own so four eyes glue into one another — then you're so CLOSE I can't see you, and everything between us goes dead.

MARY

Why does it go dead?

JAMES

Dead dead dead dead.

(*He has rolled on his back, and a **SERVANT** drops a large white globe onto his chest.*)

MARY

I don't know if it's supposed to go dead.

(*He sits up, and stares at the globe he now balances on his knees.*)

Hey, what are you looking at?

JAMES

Whatever direction I'm facing, that's what I'm looking at…

MARY

Look at me.

JAMES

Why not?

(*Turns his head to look at her from behind his dark glasses.*)

MARY

(*Looking away*)

Didn't you forget something?

JAMES

Nothing. Not my dark glasses to protect my eyes, or my handkerchief to clean up my mess afterwards, or my

ability to maintain self-control.

(*There is a pause, then he explodes.*)

Hey, I'm still here, I'm still here!

MARY

— Hey, I have an idea.

JAMES

What?

MARY

(*Very quiet*)

Let's see if kisses work.

JAMES

What do you mean, "work"?

MARY

Let's see if they give us sexual arousable.

JAMES

It's unavoidable. It works automatically.

(*He comes and gives her the white globe.*)

MARY

Don't you think I know that? Please. Get undressed for me.

JAMES

No. You get undressed.

MARY

What will happen afterwards?

JAMES

Look, Mistress Mary. I don't want to be sick!

MARY

Look, Mr˙ James Full-of-Himself! I don't want to be sick either.

(*She throws the ball to **JAMES** and runs across the room, where others surround her with a protective hospital folding screen. She calls from behind.*)

Okay. I take that back!

(***JAMES** throws away the globe, rips away the screen, grabs her shoulders, then plants a big kiss on her lips. Pulls back to watch her, and, when she doesn't indicate a response, shouts at her.*)

JAMES

That was a kiss!

MARY

(*Turning and exiting*)

How you get on my nerves when you don't answer my questions.

(***JAMES** watches her go, baffled. Then turns to the audience.*)

JAMES

Okay, folks, I didn't know the real identity of this woman, so I dredged up a whole range of experience in the hopes of a more genuine relationship, but — nothing! NOTHING!

(*He exits.*)

MARY

(*Reentering*)

I think my way back into an empty room that a couple of us filled once upon a time with a couple of ill-assorted twitches.

TONY

(*Crossing at the rear*)

I psych out parallel trains of thought.

MARY

Where, when, and how often —

(***SERVANTS** are crossing with glasses of milk on silver trays.*)

Somebody offers me a glass of warm milk, and I think — sleep means either good dreams or bad dreams.

JAMES

(*Has reentered and taken one of the glasses of milk*)

I don't need this in my life.

MARY

I don't need this in my life, either.

JAMES

(*As a* ***SERVANT*** *grabs the glass of milk out of his hand*)

Haven't I seen this hand do major flying in a category I couldn't count on once —?

TONY

(*Placing a book in* ***JAMES'S*** *hand to replace the milk*)

Read a book —

JAMES

Do they still write important stuff in here?

TONY

Levitate into an easily forgettable direction.

JAMES

(*As if performing a music hall number*)

Once upon a time I thought I could enlighten myself with a good read —

(*Tosses away the book.*)

BUT OW! —

(*He holds his head in pain and whirls once as* ***SERVANTS*** *who were lined up behind with books fall to the floor at his cry of pain.*)

All I can see is her eyes shining — and I didn't expect to be upended like this

when I tried to hold on to the invigorating experience of language
so I could vent the necessary ventilation, but no such luck — with the brain heavier still — like a

disappearing hot plate,
Ow!

(***SERVANTS*** *have crept up behind him and hit him on the head with books, and he falls under the blow.*)

Guess what I've done? I glued all my valuable pages together! But I'm not being saved — notice? I'm just turning a LAYERED self into a self that sucks its own funnel into this amazing piece of shit that learns how to do the amazing maneuver called butterfly strokes run backwards — but call that a substitution in which all points circulate in multiple directions with a very distinct aroma of impossible blends appealing to certain noses that know how to turn a twitch into a message.

MARY

Beep, beep, I hang up on you.

(*She turns and dances out of the room.*)

JAMES

Scraped out on sandpaper provided the minute a really profound idea starts doing its toilet training which is always too late for anything but a big —

MARY

(*Reenters, holding her nose*)

Go away!

JAMES

NO! I CAN'T SAY IT!
I CAN'T SAY IT!

But here's a hint!
It goes out for a secret walk
in a pair of cut tight to the bounce
SEAT OF MY PANTS!

MARY AND TONY

(*Banging on the table*)

Ants! Ants!

JAMES

(*Bending over as Servants paste loose pages of books on his rear end*)

SEAT OF MY PANTS!

MARY AND TONY

Ants in pants!

JAMES

Now wait a minute, folks — dare I bend over?

TONY

That's a perspective in which I choose non-participation.

JAMES

(*Trying to sit on a presented bucket, he tumbles to the floor*)

Of course — Lost as I am —

MARY

(*Running from the room*)

Please, I never spank somebody just because they get kissed.

JAMES

(*Rising*)

— Did somebody say "bend over"?

(*Falling again.*)

Ow! What I still feel the need for is peripheral reading matter.

MARY

(*Returning with roses, which she drops*)

Ow! There are thorns on my roses.

JAMES

So what, you hurt my eyes!

MARY

You hurt my eyes!

TONY

(*Taking off his own glasses*)

When somebody's eyes hurt, he knew it was time to clean his glasses — not that I'm wearing any — but whenever a door swings open?

(*Bangs into a wall and recovers.*)

Nothing much see-able.

MARY

Thank God for a misdirected attention span.

JAMES

Maybe that's my way of transcending difficulty with people who try to be polite, but let's face it — still wear their aura bisecting the physical body in a blur that always seems to be WHISPERING to me — careful, my friend — this is really a test.

MARY

You hurt my eyes.

JAMES

But I have this need to look at you again and again and again.

TONY

Nobody move. Why not? Is this possibly one of those embarrassing moments that get engraved in the memory because nothing else is happening?

(*There is a crash.*)

Right, almost by accident. So gruesome you can't tear yourself away. Isn't that the by-product of a genuine accident?

(*Everybody but **JAMES** and **MARY** leaves the room.*)

MARY

You hurt my eyes.

JAMES

I know that.

MARY

The minute I turn to look at you, I see you looking back into my eyes.

JAMES

Don't look back at me!

MARY

Never?

JAMES

(*Smiles bitterly to himself*)

That's not possible.

MARY

I can try.

JAMES

(*Pause*)

Didn't you read today's newspaper?

MARY

What newspaper?

JAMES

If you look at today's newspaper, you'll find information concerning the new law.

(***SERVANTS*** *run in and stuff newspapers into the drawers of a cabinet.*)

MARY

What new law? What new law? I read the newspaper, and I don't see anything about a new law.

JAMES

(*Retrieving a newspaper from the drawer*)

There's a new law from now on that all emotional-type conversations have to take place with the conversing participants each looking directly into the eyes of the person with whom they are in conversation.

MARY

That's an impossible law to enforce.

JAMES

It's the law.

MARY

I don't believe you.

JAMES

It's the law!

(*He has been tearing the newspaper pages to pieces and now throws them in her face.*)

As difficult as it may be — if the law of looking into the other person's eyes is broken —

MARY

What then?

JAMES

(*Pause*)

What am I looking at?

MARY

Me, myself.

JAMES

I'm looking into a hole.

MARY

My eyes.

JAMES

Right, a hole straight into the brain.

MARY

Me, myself!

JAMES

Nothing!

(*She backs away from him, frightened, and hits a wall by accident, uttering a little scream and falling down.*)

I mean a HOLE is nothing!

(*There is a pause; they look at each other.*)

Please, go away.

MARY

No.

(*Another pause.*)

JAMES

Come back!

MARY

No.

JAMES

(*As the music rises in volume, shouts*)

Go away!

MARY

No!

JAMES

Come back!

MARY

No!

(***JAMES****, frustrated, turns away. Then whirls back to her and, strumming his lips with his fingers, makes gibberish noises, falling to the ground as he does so.*)

MARY

Stop that, stop that! What are you, some kind of Indian in a powwow?

JAMES

(*His gibberish has changed to bitter laughter*)

I apologize

for laughing — was I laughing?

(*He gets on all fours and starts towards her.*)

Blind me! Please. Sweetie pie?

MARY

That's sick. Don't say that.

JAMES

Blind me, so I no longer have to see those eyes looking back at me and feel terrible.

MARY

Stop looking at me.

JAMES

I can't help it.

MARY

(*Nervously laughing*)

Okay, then look at me.

JAMES

Blind me!

MARY

My God — stop saying that!

JAMES

Blind me! I don't care if it hurts!

(*The music is deafening.* ***JAMES*** *runs from the room and we hear him shouting next door.*)

Goddamn it, I can never find anything when I need it!

(*He returns carrying a canvas and a paint brush. Some of the* ***SERVANTS*** *have set up easels in the rear, and peer out from behind them.* ***MARY*** *rises, and sits on the long table, having calmed herself a bit.*)

MARY

See, that was just trying to scare me. What is everybody doing?

JAMES

I don't know what everyone is doing, but I know what I'm doing. If I paint your image, maybe I'll be able to destroy your power over me.

(*He attacks his canvas, scratching at it with his brush while* ***MARY*** *acts totally uninterested, wiggling her feet and staring at the sky. Finally,* ***JAMES*** *seems to lose*

hope. His body droops, and he lets his canvas fall to the floor. He speaks very quietly to himself, but with great bitterness.)

It has the opposite effect. Shit!

(*He seems crestfallen. But **MARY** laughs at him, then jumps down from the table and, mockingly, kisses her own hand while posing provocatively. Then she waits. **JAMES** can't think of what to do, and the music gets louder and louder. Then, with insane determination, he unbuckles his belt and lets his pants fall to the floor. **MARY** crosses, looks at him, and bursts into laughter. **JAMES** pulls up his pants as **MARY** crosses behind the folding hospital screen. **JAMES** deliberates, then goes and opens the screen, seizes **MARY**, and starts planting frantic kisses over her face as the **SERVANTS** gather round to watch. The kisses make **JAMES** dizzy, and he tumbles from amidst them all and crashes to the floor. He lies there for a long moment, then screams over the music.*)

JAMES

Come back!

(***MARY** crosses to him. Nothing happens.*)

Go away!

(*She returns to the screen.*)

Come back!

(*She comes to him again. His face is now distorted with anguish.*)

Go away!

(*She doesn't move.*)

Go away! Go away! Shit!

(*He rises, faces her. Then, again, he undoes his belt, and his pants fall to the floor. They stare at each other.*

*Then she goes away. **JAMES** screams after her, his voice distorted into an animal howl.*)

Come baaaaack!

(*A pause as he thinks about things. Then he pulls up his pants and moves to a cabinet at the rear. As the **SERVANTS** start doing a controlled but jaunty jiglike dance step to the loud music, **JAMES** takes a plate holding scissors and bandages from the cabinet. He places it on the table. The **SERVANTS** are joined in*

*their dance by **TONY** and **MARY**. It amounts to a rhythmic walk, everyone snapping their fingers in rhythm, looking terribly cool, and seeming to ignore **JAMES** as he wraps the bandage around his hand to protect it, then takes the scissors and plunges them into one of his eyes. With a howl of pain, he disappears behind the table. He screams again and again over the loud music, while the dancers seem to ignore him totally, circling the table, smiling, and snapping their fingers. Finally **JAMES** reappears with a bloody rag held to his eyes.*)

JAMES

(*Laughing crazily*)

Okay, — one hundred percent okay.

(*He lowers the rag, revealing eyes encased in blood. He seems manic, energized, and totally crazed.*)

Hey — why do I get the feeling nobody believes anything I say?

TONY

I believe everything you say.

JAMES

Oh no, I believe everything YOU tell ME.

TONY

That I don't believe.

JAMES

Okay, okay, for instance — my name is still James. How many fingers does James have?

(***MARY** plops the stuffed arm into **JAMES'S** hands. The **SERVANTS** point to it with golden sticks.*)

Come on now, don't be shy, how many fingers does James still have?

TONY

Five.

JAMES

Right, and how many circulatory systems does James still have feeding the brain?

TONY

Two.

JAMES

Right, and how many eyes do I have?

(***TONY*** *turns away, troubled.*)

Well, if there were more than two of them, I wouldn't be a normal human being, would I?

TONY

I don't think the number of fingers or circulatory systems or eyes is central.

JAMES

How many eyes do *you* have — to help you stumble through life?

TONY

Two.

JAMES

You're still normal.

TONY

In some ways.

(*With a wide grin on his face,* ***JAMES*** *starts flailing about with the stuffed arm, occasionally hitting* ***TONY*** *and yelling,* "Pow, pow, pow!")

MARY

Stop that, stop that! Why are you hitting people?

JAMES

I didn't know I was hitting people, I was having fun.

TONY

Fun? Then I apologize for complaining.

JAMES

Oh, nobody's asking you to apologize.

MARY

I apologize for laughing.

JAMES

Please, never apologize!

TONY

She wasn't laughing.

JAMES

(*Popping his eyes wide*)

Was that — ME laughing?

(*He breaks into hysterical laughter.*)

MARY

This is for you.

(*She holds a piece of pie on a plate.*)

JAMES

What is it?

MARY

It's a piece of pie.

JAMES

Is it a reward?

MARY

I don't think so.

(*The **SERVANTS** enter and line up behind **JAMES**, singlefile. The last one in line carries a little roly-poly doll-man in a red suit and a crown, who holds another plate with a pie in his extended hands.*)

JAMES

But is this piece of pie really for me?

MARY

Yes, but you have to promise not to wolf it down.

JAMES

Why? Why isn't that permitted?

TONY

Because in spite of your predilection towards violence —

JAMES

Right, I'm a relatively violent animal!

TONY

You're not a wolf, sir, but a veritable human being.

JAMES

Ah, but does not a human being contain the entire range of animal and nonanimal possibilities? Angel — to wolf?

(***JAMES*** *begins leading the line of* ***SERVANTS*** *around the room, everyone holding on to the hips of the person in front.*)

TONY

A true human being chooses between seven evolutionary plateaus.

JAMES

(*Giggling as he leads the line of* ***SERVANTS***)

To be able to make such a choice is, I think, something quite beyond human capability.

MARY

Then this piece of delicious cherry pie, baked with loving hands, is no longer yours.

JAMES

(*Dropping out of the line*)

Hey — my hands seem covered with blood. Why do I see blood?

MARY

Didn't you forget something?

JAMES

I'm sure I have.

MARY

We're looking into each other's powerful eyes — just like before.

JAMES

(*Gazing toward the ceiling with his blind eyes, grinning broadly*)

Possibly, possibly!

TONY

It's a piece of pie.

JAMES

I don't believe you.

TONY

Oh!? It's a piece of warm, delicious pie.

MARY

If you wash it down, maybe, with a glass of warm milk?

JAMES

Ohhhhh, no!

TONY

C'mon, it's a kind of drug.

JAMES

Here's an idea, help me to my feet.

TONY

Totally unnecessary.

JAMES

(*Laughing and stumbling to the floor*)

Please. Postulate somebody who needs help.

TONY

I can't imagine such a category. After all, you fall down, you get up.

JAMES

(*Sprawled happily on the carpet*)

This time it's radically different.

TONY

Why?

JAMES

This is different.

TONY

What's different about it?

JAMES

Let's say I've decided to stop expending all this unnecessary energy.

TONY

I don't believe you.

JAMES

(*Rising*)

— But it's okay.

TONY

See? You've struggled to your feet…

JAMES

Of course, it's an involuntary biological manifestation.

TONY

I don't see anything biological.

MARY

It's like having heart problems.

JAMES

No, it's involuntary.

TONY

Nobody's convinced.

JAMES

Don't ask to be convinced, just humor me.

TONY

No.

JAMES

It's the best medicine. Humor me. When I say "three," we all start to revolve, which produces a certain revelatory dizziness.

MARY

All of us revolve?

JAMES

Oh, yes.

MARY

Ah, like the major planets of this and other more desirable solar systems?

JAMES

Maybe, though the names don't come immediately to mind, so I was focusing more on personal experiences.

MARY

That could be problematic.

JAMES

Ready for a surprise? One!

MARY

Okay. Two!

TONY

Okay. Three.

(***TONY*** *and* ***MARY*** *spin, but quickly get dizzy and have to support themselves on walls or furniture.*)

Hey, I'm beginning to see where this is leading us — but you didn't say anything about stopping.

JAMES

(*Laughing, because while they were spinning, he has taken a piece of pie from the little doll-man, and he now holds the slice of pie in his hand.*)

Hey, I got sticky,

gooey, smelly pie juice on my hand.

(*He laughs some more, puts the pie on the table, then sits on the table, but blind as he is, he ends up sitting on the piece of pie.*)

Uh-oh, you're not gonna believe this, but I just sat in a piece of warm, delicious pie.

(*There is a loud crash.* ***JAMES*** *laughs, but* ***TONY*** *and* ***MARY*** *hold their ears and try to escape by sending*

themselves into a spin.)

TONY

One —

MARY

Two —

TONY

Three!

(*They spin as another loud crash is heard, and as they stagger to a stop, a deep* ***VOICE*** *is heard filling the room.*)

VOICE

Space, calling … Empty space is calling James. Do you hear empty space calling James?

JAMES

Who the hell is trying to communicate with me?

VOICE

This is empty space calling James.

JAMES

How is this possible?

VOICE

Empty space calling James.

JAMES

Wait a minute — James thinks about this and James realizes he doesn't think empty space can talk. James thinks only individualized human personalities have access to language!

VOICE

Do you hear empty space calling James?

JAMES

(*Totally frightened*)

Shit, shit, shit!

(*Throws his piece of pie against the wall.*)

Okay, for the moment, I will

entertain a belief I do not believe. What is empty space trying to communicate that I don't know already?

VOICE

Empty space calling.
Empty space calling James.
Be in contact, please.
Continue —
continue to be in contact, please.

JAMES

(*Hugging **TONY***)

What do you think I should do about this?

TONY

(*Backing away*)

Please. This isn't my problem.

JAMES

(*Angrily*)

Of course it's your problem! Approximately ten minutes after it's my problem —

(*The **SERVANTS** have run into the room, each carrying a silver tray with a glass of milk.*)

Hey, what is this? Is somebody suggesting that all my problems — PROBLEMS — PROBLEMS! — get dissolved into the flux-fluxity-flux-flux — the minute I swallow my not so totally self-evident pride by washing it down with a glass of warm milk?

(*He grabs some milk and runs around the room as the **SERVANTS** follow and end up, somehow, upside down on the long table.*)

TONY

(*Shouting above the confusion, waving his saw*)

Look, nobody's asking you to drink milk. Nobody's asking you to poke out your eyeballs with a pair of scissors that don't even cut good. And nobody's asking you to be on good behavior whenever the roof falls in. Because whenever the roof falls in nobody expects anything but just another catastrophe.

(*This quiets **JAMES**, who takes a sip of milk.*)

JAMES

Hey, this is really good stuff. I mean really good stuff. I mean — this is really good stuff. But is it good for me? Or is it bad for me?

(*He turns to offer some to* ***TONY***.)

TONY

(*Holding up his hands*)

Later.

(***JAMES*** *turns and offers some to* ***MARY***.)

MARY

(*Holding up her hands*)

Later.

TONY

(*Threateningly to* ***JAMES***)

You drink it.

JAMES

No problem, I like it.

TONY

Then drink it.

JAMES

Why wouldn't I drink it? I like it.

TONY

Okay, then drink it.

JAMES

I like it, no problem. So why wouldn't I drink it?

(*He looks at it. Takes another sip — then, after a moment has passed, winces and holds his stomach.*)

Oh … shit!

(*The lights fade to darkness.*)

THE END